

# **OPERATIONAL ART OF THE GERMAN ARMY: "FREIE OPERATIONEN"**

**A MONOGRAPH  
BY  
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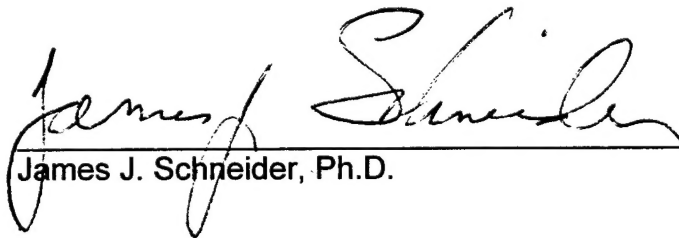
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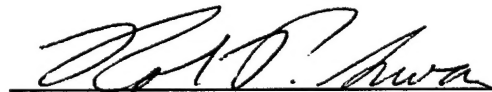
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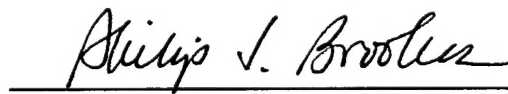
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## ABSTRACT

OPERATIONAL ART OF THE GERMAN ARMY:"FREIE OPERATIONEN" by  
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The geostrategic and military situation for NATO (and specifically for the FEDERAL REPUBLIC of GERMANY) created in the wake of Germany's reunification and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, has led to revival of the military-strategic principle of counter-concentration under the umbrella of the Alliance's strategic defense. The Alliance's New Strategic Concept, dated 7 November 1991, insists on the Alliance's continuing a purely defensive orientation. This implies that NATO forces will never be employed in the context of a strategic offensive, but only used in a strategic defensive role. The principle of military-strategic counter-concentration of MC 400 is the core of NATO's new military strategy.

Based to these historical facts, three related processes are having profound effects on the Bundeswehr - the German Federal Armed Forces. First, the ruling of the Constitutional Court relative to the commitment of forces outside of Germany and NATO territory has expanded the range of its possible military missions. Second, a new operational dimension has been created by the prospects for greater integration of the Bundeswehr in multinational formations and more important operations. Third, as policy changes follow these developments, the size and composition of the Bundeswehr are evolving to meet the associated challenges. All of these changes - within NATO and the European Union, within the range of potential missions, and within the Bundeswehr itself - have influenced German thinking on matters that were, like many other military and political initiatives, frozen by the superpower standoff that began in 1945.

Consequently, strategic thinking and the supporting operational concept, reflecting the new strategic situation in Europe are evolving free of Cold War restraints. The effect is a "return to basics" in operational thinking and operational planning. Therefore, a "new" operational thinking started in the German Army in accordance with contemporary German politics, German military history and current strategic and operational planning within NATO, the WEU and the German government. This thinking process is summarized in the German Army under the subject of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" and will have a tremendous influence in organisation, armament planning and leadership programs.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In his speech on "The Unavoidable Globalization of German Foreign Policy" on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the German Society for Foreign Policy on March 13th, 1995, German President Roman Herzog stressed the role of the armed forces as an active element of politics. "We need them", he declared, "to be forearmed against genocide, aggression and blackmail. In such cases, we must also be prepared to use military power once all other means have failed. But it is equally true to say that military operations are no panacea and that they must not be uppermost in our minds"<sup>1</sup>). This statement by Germany's Federal President provides the bottom line for a broad discussion on the expanded mission spectrum and future use of the multinationally integrated German Armed Forces. The President's avowal of the necessity of formulating German interests and of implementing them in the political field highlights the prominent role of our Armed Forces as the military strategic arm in the context of the national strategy of the Federal Republic of Germany. To complete their mission the forces must be capable of being deployed throughout the full spectrum of potential military actions in the operational continuum at the military strategic level, ranging from humanitarian relief operations to national and allied defence in all their manifestations.<sup>2</sup>)

National and allied defence is planned and conducted by NATO in accordance with the allied nations consensus. The parameters governing the employment of German soldiers for crisis reaction missions, including those under the umbrella of the United Nations (UN) or the Western European Union (WEU), are refined after a long, intensive and comprehensive discussion between the major political parties and inside the German Society. In its ruling of July 12th, 1994, the Bundesverfassungsgericht (Federal

Constitutional Court) affirmed that German Forces could legally be used outside its own and NATO's territory when necessary for our national defense and for the defense of our political interests.

The geostrategic and military situation for NATO and for the Federal Republic of Germany, created in the wake of Germany's reunification and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, has led to a revival of the military-strategic principle of counter-concentration under the umbrella of the Alliance's strategic defense. NATO document MC 14/3 from 1968, which has now been superseded by document MC 400, dated 12 December 1991, spelled out NATO's military strategy of defense against an aggression of the Warsaw Pact in the era of East-West confrontation.<sup>3)</sup> The Alliance's New Strategic Concept, dated 7 November 1991, insists on the Alliance's continuing a purely defensive orientation: "None of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defence."<sup>4)</sup> This implies that NATO forces will never be employed in the context of a strategic offensive, but only be used in a strategic defensive role with the latter forming the strategic roof. The principle of military-strategic counter-concentration of MC 400 is the core of NATO's new military strategy. In the event a major act of aggression against Alliance territory, NATO's armed forces must be able to counter-concentrate in order to defend as close to the threatened borders as possible. The military-strategic principle of counter-concentration is defined as "the massing of significant military forces at a particular time and place with sufficient capability to counter an aggressor's force concentration".<sup>5)</sup> In the future allied forces must be capable of being massed from all regions and, if necessary, ordered into action wherever crises develop and attacks on NATO become a reality. This would revive the military-strategic principle of counter-concentration which

was unable to be applied in the years of East-West confrontation in which NATO and Warsaw Pact forces stood in closed ranks, as it were, only a short distance apart under a military strategy of forward defense.

Even in the future, NATO's conventional forces will be unable to prevent wars on their own. Nuclear arms alone render aggression incalculable and unacceptable. Therefore, Nuclear arms still playing a major role in Nato's new military strategy, but understood as "weapons of last resort" assigned to the strategic level they have lost their operational dimension.<sup>6)</sup>

Major General Carl von Clausewitz's conclusions about the essence and the use of military means in the spectrum of potential political actions and his suggested interpretations, Field Marshal Helmut von Moltke's military generalship, and Field Marshal Graf Alfred von Schlieffen's as well as General Ludwig Beck's strategic and operational thoughts help German General Staff Officers, working in multinational headquarters, to better appreciate the principle of military-strategic counter-concentration revived by MC 400. They also serve as aids for the elaboration of the requirements for preventive security measures with which the political and military leaders of the allied nations are being confronted these days.

The Federal Republic of Germany has a legitimate interest in protecting the territory of Germany against crises and military conflicts and to counter them outside its national boundaries. Should such crises and conflicts occur on German soil, damage must be limited and any conflict must be finished quickly. The design of the Federal Republic of Germany's force contributions stet such that, as these forces are integrated into multinational formations and after successful military-strategic counter-concentration,



they will be able to launch concentric counterattacks in the mold of Clausewitz, no matter whether this will involve crisis management, allied defence at a distance outside German borders, or integrated national defence.

Since the day of German unification on 3 October 1990 and after the dissolution of the former East German Army (National People's Army (NPA)), which was completed in 1992, the German Armed Forces were restructured and optimized in order to cope with the new political-military spectrum. The Bundeswehr of the future with its rapidly available Reaction Forces and its augmentation-dependent Main Defence Forces are being structured to the future of political-military challenges as far as possible. The Alliance's operational planning process will be more strongly influenced by the Bundeswehr than in the past, and the Bundeswehr will also participate in the shaping of these plans from their initial stages onward. The concentration of our multinational forces in the right space, with the required force levels and within an appropriate timeframe, will be the ingredients of successful Combined Joint Operations based on close interaction of land, air and sea forces. Success will be assured through an appropriate positioning of the point of main effort, through surprise, generalship and an appropriate measure of quantitative superiority at the point of effort.

These challenges lead us to the axioms of Moltke's ideas on generalship, which, briefly speaking and taken in our context, state: There will be a requirement, derived from the Alliance's military-strategic goal, for a clear definition of the operational objective and for the consistent pursuit of this objective. This requires the operational commander to think ahead, base his ideas on his professional knowledge, and develop plans that take into account the difficult problems of multinationally integrated forces as well as the

necessary preparations under the process of military-strategic counter-concentration. The Contingency Operation Plans of the years marked by the East-West confrontation had been unable to do justice to this particular principle of Moltke's. Operations based on the force posture achieved after the completion of military-strategic counter-concentration must be conducted freely. Hence, the commanding of troops becomes again an art, and thus a truly creative activity, something that it had lacked for decades, because it existed only at a rudimentary level.

In the context to the political realities, the strategic situation in Europe and based to NATO's new military strategy, the Chief of the German Army Lieutenant General Helmut Willmann, forced his officers to move beyond the limitations of the Cold War in strategic and operational thinking and planning within the Bundeswehr and where ever possible within NATO's headquarters. For this renaissance of strategic and operational thinking he used the term "FREIE OPERATIONEN"

This study will describe the general tendency of operational thinking in the German Army and will examine the elements of "FREIE OPERATIONEN". A determination will be made concerning whether this operational thinking is in accordance with contemporary German politics, German military history, Cold War operational planning, and current strategic and operational planning within NATO, WEU, and the German government. This study will also look critically at, how this "new" operational thinking will influence Germany's armaments planning and command and leadership training.

Humanitarian operations by the Bundeswehr and its participation in peacekeeping measures in and out of area under other collective security structures such as the United Nations or the OSCE are not subjects to consideration in this paper.

## **II. CLASSICAL OPERATIONS - "FREIE OPERATIONEN"**

"FREIE OPERATIONEN" is the general term for the elements characterizing today's employment of forces in armed conflict. In conducting "FREIE OPERATIONEN" it is an essential prerequisite to gain the initiative as early as possible and to determine the rhythm of the operation himself. Also it is imperative to utilize space for a quick concentration of forces, for rapid and surprising movements. These operations are to be conducted in a highly mobile and aggressive manner and directed simultaneously against the front, deep flanks and rear of the enemy. The decision is to be made where such action is favored by terrain and balance of forces and where the enemy is to be surprised. Selecting the area, time and type of combat are crucial. Military leaders must be fully aware of these elements and be able to apply them in the course of their operations. By no means does it imply the employment of armed forces free of restrictions and conditions. In "FREIEN OPERATIONEN" the commander's freedom of action is determined by

- the political leadership which lays down the political objective of the military mission and orders either directly or through alliance structures - the commitment of armed forces;
- the military strategic level of command which coordinates the employment of forces so that the objectives of the political strategic leadership can be achieved;
- the operational level of command which develops an operational concept based on military strategic requirements and translates this concept into directives and orders for the tactical level of command.

In "FREIE OPERATIONEN", the force commander is challenged for the first time. Exploiting all means available to him, he has to translate military strategic directives into concrete action.

Based on the changes in the security environment, NATO's new strategy, military strategy and the before mentioned restrictions and conditions, mastery of the elements of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" and their constant analysis present a challenge to the military leaders of our time. This is a lesson to be learned from taking a look at history. Especially if you compare the situation prior to the Second World War between France and Germany.

*"The Wehrmacht's leaders - youthful, energetic, and dedicated professionals - had studied modern war more closely and had found out how to use tanks and airplanes to transform combat from a slogging match anchored in trenches and fortifications into a fast-moving contest whose outcome was determined by agility and daring".<sup>7)</sup>*

The challenge is to think and to rethink the principle elements of Operational Art. The term "operational art" will be understood in the sense as used by Shimon Naveh in his book "In Pursuit of Military Excellence" when he stated:

*"War is a national undertaking which must be coordinated from the highest level of policymaking to the basic levels of execution. Military strategy, operational art, and tactics are the broad divisions of activity in preparing for and conducting war. Successful strategy achieves national and alliance political aims at the lowest possible cost of lives and treasure. Operational art translates those aims into effective military*

*operations and campaigns. Sound tactics win the battles and engagements which produce successful campaigns and operations".<sup>8)</sup>*

Only few of the elements, especially the "Joint" and "Combined" aspects of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" are really new.

Some of them have always been generally applicable. Others have fallen into oblivion in the decades of the East-West confrontation in Europe. The conditions created by the disposition of corps sectors like a layer cake along the former inner-German border, the lack of readily available reserves available for resolving critical situations in the corps sectors, as well as the anticipated reliance upon, and possible early use of, nuclear weapons as part of the strategy of flexible response, have caused other elements of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" to fall into oblivion.

After World War One, many politicians and soldiers took the view that the next war would begin just like World War One had ended. The operational opportunities offered by the new tank and its employment together with the Air Force were recognized by only very few people. Marc Bloch criticized the French high command for the outcome of "The six week war" : *That the German triumph was essentially an intellectual rather than a physical victory.*<sup>9)</sup> For the French high command this was to be paid for dearly!

Major General Carl von Clausewitz insisted that the strategic defensive was the strongest form of warfare. It consists of two parts: waiting and action; and he called the active part the *"operational-tactical offensive"*.<sup>10)</sup> Using today's terminology, we find that this part is now referred to as a military-strategic counter-concentration that is derived from the military-strategic objective. It is on this basis that we will be able to build the posture required for the conduct of decisive operations with the object of

enabling us to deal a single blow to the opponent that will stop his aggression. Such offensively conducted operations can be referred to as counter-attacks under the roof of the strategic defensive. Clausewitz, in discussing the possibility of achieving the operational goal by launching a large-scale attack, described this operation in terms of a concentric or convergent attack - or "counter-attack", to use our terminology - that bears the hallmark of a decisive operational counterblow being dealt to the opponent by surprise.

In his monumental book "On War", where much of it is still of contemporary relevance, Clausewitz describes the essence of a concentric (counter) attack in Chapter 9 of the VIIIth book as follows:

***"Both in strategy and in tactics a convergent attack always holds out promise of increased results, for if it succeeds the enemy is not just beaten; he is virtually cut off. The convergent attack, then, is always the more promising; but since forces are divided and the theater is enlarged, it also carries a grater risk. As with the attack and defense, the weaker form promised the grater success. All depends, therefor, on whether the attacker feels strong enough to go after such a prize."*<sup>11)</sup>**

Whether on the basis of military strategic counter-concentration, the enemy should be beaten through a convergent counter-attack, or whether an encirclement should cause the enemy to discontinue his aggression, to withdraw, or to capitulate, will be dictated by the military-strategic input which the military in charge of the operation will receive. This input will be subject to the consensus among the allies and defined within NATO. The

nations and the alliance will specify which elements of a potential military mission in the operational continuum will be applied.

This is an aspect on which Clausewitz commented as well, by stating:

*"That is why governments and commanders have always tried to find ways of avoiding a decisive battle and of reaching their goal by other means or of quietly abandoning it."*<sup>12)</sup>

Clausewitz perceived the main battle fought by a concentric attack to *"the bloodiest solution"*.<sup>13)</sup> For him there was also the possibility of encircling the enemy forces and thus to achieve the effect of *"killing the enemy's spirit."*<sup>14)</sup> This view is still fully valid today.

Counter-concentration is the concept that will allow NATO to conduct operations against an opponent with the object of delivering a surprise, decisive attack that will cause an aggressor to capitulate or reconsider his actions.

Clausewitz's suggested interpretations and conclusions related to the nature and use of military means to support political actions were the basis for the plans and operations of a number of brilliant German commanders.

The military end of the Austrian-Prussian War in 1866 came when Field Marshal Helmut von Moltke, under the roof of a strategic offensive, conducted a military-strategic counter-concentration by the Prussian Army near KOENIGGRAETZ and subsequently launched a concentric attack, while on the move, against the Austrian Forces. Though, in the war against France, he was able to launch a brilliant counter-concentration, the campaign could not be decided through any single battle

Another example for counter-concentration is the Battle of TANNENBERG in August 1914. The commander of the 8th Army, Colonel General von Prittwitz und Gaffron, received the military-strategic directive from the German high command, known at that time as a deployment directive, to protect *“our eastern provinces against a Russian invasion”*, for whose implementation *“only the overall situation existing after the staging of the 8th Army”* could be *“decisive”*, and to consider “supporting the offensive Austria intended to launch” against Russia. The Austrian forces deployed against Russia along the general line west of RADOM-PRZMYSL-STANISLAU and wanted to attack quickly. The military-strategic directive went on to state that the aim was to harmonize action with the Austrian Army and that, in an absolute emergency, Prussian territory east of the WEICHSEL had to be abandoned until the Army could be reinforced by bringing up other forces.<sup>15)</sup>

The German high command knew that, without reinforcements, the 8th Army was too weak to destroy the Russians in an operational concentric counter-attack from a military-strategic counter-concentration. It hoped to be able to move reinforcements to east Prussia in time after victoriously suppressing France. The commander of 8th Army was given a free hand in the accomplishment of his difficult mission. The only condition he had to bear in mind was to hold the WEICHSEL line and to bar the Russians from penetrating to Germany. The 8th Army fought with varying success against the Russians that penetrated into East Prussia in the Battle of STALLUEPONEN on 17 August, the Battle of GUMBINEN 20 August and the Battle of ORLAU-FRANKENHAUSEN on 24 August 1914. When the German high command considered that the commander of the 8th Army wanted to withdraw all his forces to the WEICHSEL at once when there was no



need to, he and his chief of staff were superseded in command by the reactivated General of the Infantry Paul von Hindenburg and Major General Erich Ludendorff. The new commander and his chief of staff, having withdrawn some of the forces of the 8th Army tied by the 1st Russian Army in the north of East Prussia in an operation full of risks and redeployed them southwards, succeeded in annihilating the bulk of the 2nd Russian Army after an almost successful encirclement in the Battle of TANNENBERG from 26 to 31 August 1914. They then regrouped their forces north-westwards and drove the 1st Russian Army out of East Prussia from 9 to 14 September in the first of the Battles of the MAZURIAN Lakes. It had almost been encircled. On 17 September, Hindenburg began to switch his Army, which had since been reinforced, southwards and came to the help of the Austrians, who were under hard pressure from the Russians. It was possible to prevent Russian forces penetrating into Silesia.

The road to success is easier if adequate forces are available. Inadequate forces, with which operations must be conducted from a military-strategic counter-concentration, pose greater demands on commanders and troops. The risks are far higher and the road to victory is more thorny. The victories achieved by the 8th Army in East Prussia did not mark the end of the war with Russia.

Field Marshal Erich von Manstein's plan in 1940, known as the so called *"cut-of-the-sickle operation"* is of considerable importance for studying the operational idea of "FREIE OPERATIONEN". His basic idea, *"in launching a surprise attack through the ARDENNES - where the enemy would certainly not be expecting any armour because of the terrain - towards the lower SOMME in order to cut off the enemy forces thrown into BELGIUM forward of that river. This was the only possible means of destroying*

*the enemy's entire northern wing in BELGIUM preparatory to winning a final victory in FRANCE".*<sup>16)</sup> The Western Campaign was won by a concentric attack. Yet it failed to finish World War II, a war which Adolf Hitler had started with brutal criminal intent.

Prior to and during the war of liberation in Kuwait military experts in the media drew up an apocalyptic picture, claiming that the fight against Saddam Hussein's land forces, which were considered the fourth largest in the world, would leave thousands of dead soldiers on the side of the coalition force deployed against the dictator.

Their thinking was determined by the battles of World War Two, the Korean War and the War in Vietnam.

During Operation Desert Storm in 1991 General Norman Schwarzkopf successfully realized the scheduled military strategic concept in a forty-day air operation with support from naval forces and a four-day land and air battle. Also, General Schwarzkopf recognized during his process of decision-making in a very early stage:

*"The textbook way to defeat such a force - the army of Iraq in Kuwait and westward - would have been to hold it in place with frontal attack while sending an even bigger army to outflank it, envelop it and crush it against the sea."*<sup>17)</sup>

After having suffered heavy losses, Saddam Hussein's troops were forced to withdraw from Kuwait. Superior reconnaissance and information technology as well as precision stand-off weapons and the professional application of the elements of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" led to victory.

This was achieved at a cost of allied soldiers killed in action lower than anyone had considered possible. This number will be taken as a yardstick for future operations.

*"In less than six weeks, 795.000 Coalition troops destroyed a defending Iraqi*

*army of hundreds of thousands, losing only 240 attackers. This loss rate of fewer than one fatality per 3.000 soldiers was less than one tenth of the Israelis' loss rate in either the 1967 Six-Day War or the Bekaa Valley campaign in 1982, less than one twentieth of the Germans' in their blitzkriegs against Poland or France in 1939-40, and about one one-thousandth of U.S. Marines' in the invasion of Tarawa in 1943.*"<sup>18)</sup>

General Scharzkopf and the modern U.S. force planners convincingly proved that it is wrong to adhere to a way of thinking that is shaped by the conditions of yesteryear. To put it in another way, by quoting Simpkin: *"While I agree that military history provides valuable depth of perspective and a common background, I do not share the historian's view that it is the only proper path to military wisdom."*<sup>19)</sup> In order to make the right decisions in action, military leader must constantly confront the elements of "FREIE OPERATIONEN". In this connection, it is crucial to achieve the optimum balance between operational requirements and technological capabilities. As military leaders we should always be aware that *"Science and technology transformed the battelfield"*.<sup>20)</sup>

If crisis management is unsuccessful, it will be necessary to specify in the strategic military goals of the Alliance and the directive issued to the authorized military commander, whether - under the umbrella of NATO's strategic defense and on the basis of NATO's military strategic counterconcentration - an aggressor is to be defeated by offensive or defensive operations.

History and, more recently, the 1991 Gulf War teach us that a successful military-strategic counter-concentration without superior forces, from which a concentric counter-attack can be launched that enables the enemy to be defeated by an operational

counterblow, is fraught with risk. Whether a concentric counter-attack is launched or whether the enemy accepts the superiority of the defender's forces and surrenders without fighting the battle is primarily determined by the forces that can be massed in a military-strategic counter-concentration. The military-strategic directive stipulates whether a concentric counter-attack, the purpose of which is to bring about a decision, is to be conducted. The question of what is to be done if the military-strategic objective cannot be achieved by means of a concentric counter-attack or what action should be taken to achieve it in some other manner; finally, the question of what is to be done if the operation fails: these questions are of immense importance. As examples from history show, they have not always been asked clearly enough.

In the Gulf War 1991, General Norman Schwarzkopf had the force superiority needed for a concentric counter-attack.

The operations that were conducted by the German 8th Army in the summer of 1914 in East Prussia and resulted in the almost complete annihilation of two Russian armies are an example of how numerically inferior forces without the capability to launch a decisive concentric counter-attack can achieve their military-strategic objective in a series of battles where risks abound. And the Western Campaign in 1940 shows, how initial surprise, the importance of fast-moving elements together with building a clear main effort can influence the outcome of operations.

Today, by directing all assets towards a common objective and an appropriate tasking and disposition of friendly forces, the operational level of command translates into action the military strategic principle of counter-concentration.

Subsequently, it will be necessary to gain and retain the initiative and freedom of action by conducting "FREIE OPERATIONEN" in order to win the battle.

In the future too, NATO's conventional forces alone will be unable to ensure the prevention of wars. Only nuclear weapons render acts of aggression incalculable and unacceptable. As *"weapons of last resort"* exclusively assigned to the strategic level they are now devoid of any operational dimension.

As regards forces, time and space, at present there is no way of preplanning operations conducted under the umbrella of strategic defense. Only in a crisis will they be developed in a flexible manner and as the Alliance's proportionate response to the type and extent of an actual threat.

*"To me (Chief of the Army of the Federal Republic of Germany) it is a matter of prime concern to give prominence to the key terms 'initiative', 'gaining freedom of action' and 'mental agility' as the basic requirements resulting therefrom with regard to the commander's personality."*<sup>21)</sup>

In this connection, it is imperative to take the lessons taught by military history, to exploit them for application today and adapt them to the requirements of tomorrow.

This leads again to Fieldmarshal Graf Helmuth von Moltke, who wrote about operational planning:

*"No plan of operations could look with any assurance beyond the first encounter with the main enemy forces. Only a layman will believe that the pattern of events of a campaign as perceived is a reflection of the consistent execution of a preplanned, comprehensively conceived and predetermined original idea."*<sup>22)</sup>

This principle will continue to apply, even if external conditions and parameters change during the course of time.

### **III. ELEMENTS OF "FREIE OPERATIONEN"**

The changes in Germany's geostrategic situation accompanying the radical security change that took place since 1989 and the reduction of armed forces in Europe have altered the relative importance of the operational factors of forces, time and space.

The principles governing the conduct of operations are no longer subject to the mental constraints of the German officer corps as well as political constraints by the aforementioned disposition of forces interlaced like a layer cake during the time of East-West confrontation.

At that time, the land forces operational freedom of action was confined itself to containment and counterattacks due to the inadequate reserves available to the Commander in Chief Central Region. Their operational planning was of a highly prospective nature. They were designed to maintain a coherent defense and regain lost ground in the corps sectors. Operational considerations concentrated on the area to be protected and to the forces employed there.

In the future, changed conditions will primarily require that consideration be given to enemy forces and their employment in the area concerned. This has made "FREIE OPERATIONEN" possible again and their use advisable. This is characterized by the operation of fewer forces in a larger area.

The concept of FORCE XXI described this phenomenon as "*extended battlespace*" which will have a critical influence on operational art in future wars'.<sup>23)</sup> On the other hand we have the concept of "*empty battlefield*" which is described by Dupuy:

*"The major reason that casualty rates have declined despite increasing weapons lethality is that targets have become more dispersed. As weapons have become more lethal, the targets of those weapons - the troops deployed for battle - have spread out in order to lessen the effectiveness of the weapons".<sup>24)</sup>*

In each case it will be important to see this extended area as an advantage and to use it dynamically. Control of the area will not so much depend on its occupation by friendly forces as on their permanent exploitation of all opportunities to bring combat power to bear throughout the area and utilize the area's entire depth in a real-time and flexible manner. This way movements in the area take on a new quality. The additional time required for covering long distances to the area of employment under the conditions of new multinational structures and the requirements of combat service support must always be taken into account. Due to the rapid development of technology, the factors of time and information have gained considerably in importance. The collection and use of information will have to be given more and more attention. Only he who wins the battle for time and is capable of gaining the information edge will succeed in surprising the enemy and seizing the initiative.

The significance of the fight for information was recognized by the American armed forces early on. *"To win the information war"* or *"Gain Information Dominance"*<sup>25)</sup> - are US Army objectives which have now also been included in the German Army command and control regulations. Controlling information is a prerequisite for the successful conduct of "FREIE OPERATIONEN":

*"Die Faehigkeit, Informationen ueber den Gegner zu gewinnen, zu verarbeiten, zu nutzen, in den eigenen Streitkraefen zu verbreiten und gleichzeitig*

*den Gegner daran zu hindern, selbst diese Faehigkeit zu entfalten, wird zukuenftige Kriege entscheiden".<sup>26)</sup>*

Also the question has to be answered, where do "FREIE OPERATIONEN" fit into the different levels of command? The German Army differentiates between *campaigns, battles and operations*.<sup>27)</sup>

A campaign (Feldzug) is directed at a military strategic objective. It consists of several battles and is conducted by the operational commander either in a "joint" or "combined" setting.

A battle (Schlacht) is directed at an operational objective and consists of engagements conducted by the armed services in cooperation with the forces of allied states.

Operations (Operation) are military actions carried out during a mission by one of the parties involved that are coherent in space and time and directed at a common objective. They are conducted prior to, during and following engagements. It is also German Army's understanding that the overall operation shall include close, deep and rear operations.

The term "FREIE OPERATIONEN" used into the German Army and its content do not fit into this above mentioned system of definitions. "FREIE OPERATIONEN" can extend from brigade to beyond corps level and consequently take place throughout the entire spectrum of the overall operation. For the most part, however, they will take place in the course of deep operations.

An essential prerequisite of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" is for the commander not to allow the enemy to force combat activities and sequences upon him but to determine the rhythm of the engagement himself. He must seek the decision where such action is



favorable by terrain and balance of forces and where the enemy is to be surprised. Selecting the area, time and type of combat are crucial to the commander's endeavour to establish local superiority of his forces. As demonstrated by General Norman Schwarzkopf in Kuwait 1991, he must be able to bring about a decision at the right time and place while keeping friendly losses to a minimum.

Operations are directed at destroying the enemy's command and control capability, combat power and sustainability. Responsiveness, superior combat power and mobility of friendly forces as well as the ability to disrupt the respective enemy capabilities are prerequisites for gaining and maintaining superiority and thus the initiative.

Within the scope of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" this may primarily be achieved by the following elements:

- Active utilization of the area;
- Culminating point and second strike;
- Deep battle;
- Indirect advance;
- Main effort;
- Varying types of combat;
- The "Joint aspect";
- The "Combined aspect".

#### ***ACTIVE UTILIZATION OF THE AREA***

Operations may be conducted sequentially or simultaneously - but also independently of each other in terms of time - throughout the depth and width of the area

of responsibility. They are to be planned and executed by the responsible commander as a coherent and common tactical or operational mission.

The commander must continually consider which effects or forces to concentrate in order to deny the enemy the realization of his overall intent throughout the depth of his operations and to destroy his groupings of forces. In this connection, the simultaneous concentration of effort (e.g. fire) over different distances will often have a greater and speedier effect than the massing of forces in one area aimed at achieving local superiority.

However, this must not lead to the wrong impression that, owing to the development of munitions and delivery systems particularly suited to deep battle, mechanized and air mechanized forces are no longer required. Mechanized and air mechanized forces are indispensable for seizing and holding ground.

Against this background, it is imperative to utilize space for a quick concentration of forces, for rapid and surprising movements and for striking the enemy's flank and rear. This means that it may be expedient initially to sacrifice space in order to gain the time required to reorganize forces of offensive action and to concentrate and employ these forces in a manner that surprises the enemy.

Frequently it will be important to conduct defensive operations - delaying actions and limited defense - to create the preconditions for launching offensive operations against the enemy's flanks and rear with the bulk of the forces.

Even in a defensive operation ordered by the military strategic level of command the bulk of the forces will have to be temporarily employed to attain offensive objectives, i.e. to maintain or to regain the initiative. In this effort the commander must act in accordance with the intent of his superior commander and the objectives of the overall

operation. This means using as few forces as feasible for defensive operations and as many as possible for offensive operations, in order to ensure the rapid build-up of sufficient strength at the decisive point.

### ***CULMINATING POINT AND SECOND STRIKE***

When conducting "FREIE OPERATIONEN" the commander must always remember that the enemy will also attempt to exploit the element of surprise and thus wrest the initiative by choosing the type of maneuver, the terrain and the sequence of combat actions. If, during an engagement, the ability to take the initiative and successfully continue operations threatens to pass to the other side, then the culminating point has been reached. Commanders at the operational level must aim at drawing the enemy to his culminating point and deny him the achievement of his military strategic objective. Once the enemy has past his culminating point, the commander will frequently be able to bring about a decision by a second strike. More often than not, however, he will only succeed in doing so, if he is prepared to accept risk while taking his chance.

### ***DEEP BATTLE***

At the time of World Wars One and Two, commanders did not have any forces for their extensive operations that were particularly suited for deep battle. They more or less had to anticipate the culminating point and the course of action the enemy was likely to take. They succeeded in this effort, if their skill, experience and instinct led them to assess the enemy's course of action correctly. Commanders are better off today. They already possess, or will possess in the foreseeable future, the forces and assets required for fighting deep in the enemy's area.

Such operations will not only include airpower, but also long-range artillery systems, combat and reconnaissance drones and airmobile forces supplemented by special forces. The means will allow the commanders to recognize the enemy's intent much better as ever before, to attrit enemy forces during the approach prior to a direct engagement with friendly forces, and to prevent them from entering the battle as planned. Thus, operational endeavors towards a favourable local balance of forces will be supported by the effects of one's own assets brought to bear in the depth of the enemy's territory. This will create favourable conditions for operations by friendly forces with minimum losses.

In deep operations, combat actions will primarily be directed against the enemy's command and control and reconnaissance capabilities, his reserves and against those forces that are suited for large-scale offensive operations. In addition to its direct effects deep battle also has an indirect effect, since it allows commanders of friendly forces greater operational freedom of action by:

- engaging enemy forces unexpectedly brought up on the flanks and in the rear of friendly forces as well as reserves that are rapidly moved up, and by
- destroying enemy forces that threaten to penetrate overstretched or temporary defenses of friendly forces.

Consequently, deep battle fought as part of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" has a dual function:

- to establish a favourable balance of forces for the direct engagement of armoured combat forces and
- to increase operational freedom of action.

## *INDIRECT ADVANCE*

In the course of deep battle indirect advance is another important element of the conduct of operations.

It is not through direct attacks, for instance against his bridgeheads, that the enemy is deprived of his freedom of action, but through indirect advance such as the commitment of friendly forces in depth against enemy follow-on forces which are to sustain the bridgehead or use it as a basis to start their attack.

For the exercise "PEGASUS 95"<sup>28</sup>) carried out by the European-Corps, a scenario was created which gives an example of successful indirect advance in the course of the deep battle. South of the river MARNE, the corps conducted a double envelopment with the bulk of its forces against the reserve of the attacking 6th Army of Seeland with the objective of destroying them. In this effort, the commanding general, who is the Chief of German Army today, accepted the enemy establishing two bridgeheads north of the MARNE, because this gave the best opportunity of surprising the enemy and establishing local superiority by concentrating forces in the right place and the right time.

While extending the corps freedom of action, this move would have inflicted heavy losses on the enemy in a real war. Apart from surprise, the concentration of forces at a particular objective was another decisive element for the success of the operation.

Indirect advance may be aimed at the immediate destruction of enemy forces in the way the "PEGASUS 95" example described. But it may also be aimed at effecting the enemy's command and control capability, disrupting his supply lines, neutralizing his command centres and cutting off his withdrawal routes. This will also help create psychological disorder among enemy forces.

Indirect advance is primarily a matter of bypassing the enemy along the line of least resistance in order to penetrate deep into his area and - depending on the situation and intention - to destroy either concentrations of enemy forces or enemy command and control centres. The effect of indirect advance will mainly be based on surprise and the speed of friendly forces. Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel was a master of indirect advance. His Africa campaign provides a multitude of study worthy examples.<sup>29)</sup>

### ***MAIN EFFORT***

Colonel General Heinz Guderian's remark "Nicht kleckern sondern klotzen" which is in English "***Concentrate - don't piecemeal***" means, concentrate your efforts on one approach rather than splitting them up, General Guderian saw this as the tactical requirement for the future: "***Surprise; Deployment en masse; Suitable terrain***".<sup>30)</sup>

Concerning the main effort Moltke said:

***"Concentration of all forces without a specific purpose or for a purpose other than to bring about a decision is therefore a mistake. For this decision one can never be too strong".***<sup>31)</sup>

If the commander decides to establishing a point of main effort by concentrating his forces, he must stick to the decision once taken in order to maintain the initiative, even if this entails a possible threat to his own deep flank. In a calculated assessment of the risk involved, he may only employ those forces to flank protection that are absolutely necessary, while he has to orient the bulk of his forces toward one single objective so that he will be able to impose his will. In this connection, the following basic rule put forth by Moltke will continue to apply:

*"In this fog of uncertainty at least one thing must be certain - one's own decision. That decision must be adhered to and one will be well advised not to be dissuaded from it by enemy activities as long as this is not absolutely necessary."<sup>32</sup>)*

### **VARYING TYPES OF COMBAT**

While in the time of East-West confrontation the types of combat were seen in close relation to space and their purpose was determined by space and the enemy situation, it is mainly the will of the commander that is now coming to the fore. Today, the purpose of the type of combat chosen is again determined by the commander's will to enforce the intent pursued in the area concerned. Freedom of action in "FREIE OPERATIONEN" will thus also alter the interrelationship of the types of combat, i.e. delaying, defensive and offensive operations.

As before, delaying operations as an independent type of combat may be aimed at gaining the time required for providing the basis for other types of operation. However, delaying operations must not be confined to sacrificing space. By deliberately giving up ground it must rather create a situation that will allow the main body held in readiness to mount counteroffensive thrusts.

In addition to its previous purpose of annihilating or destroying as many strong enemy forces as possible and holding a specific area against all attacks, defense must be orientated towards creating the conditions for the attack of the main body and thus for bringing about a decision. Today, it is also a main characteristic of defense that it is a temporary operation and that the enemy is to be engaged where he can be defeated.

The purpose of offensive operations will remain unchanged, namely to destroy enemy forces and to seize terrain. However, this will no longer be done as planned during the time of East-West confrontation, i.e. primarily by means of an operational counterattack conducted as a reaction to and climax of the defensive operation.

Wherever possible, we will have to seek the decision in large-scale offensive operations based on the disposition of military strategic counterconcentration. These operations are to be conducted in a highly mobile and aggressive manner and directed simultaneously against the front, flanks and rear of the enemy in order to attain decisive successes at the first opportunity, if possible.

To achieve this, the sequencing of the operation must never be schematic. Neither the decision for or against conducting a delay, nor the transition from temporary defense to the attack or vice versa must be fixed planned in anticipation, it must be a free decision by assessing the situation during the ongoing operation.

### ***THE "JOINT ASPECT"***

Joint command and control is a characteristic feature of successful operational command and control. For the German Army, this mainly means cooperation with air forces.

Fighting for air supremacy or at least air superiority, air forces render an important contribution to the overall conduct of war by establishing the essential prerequisites for the operational freedom of the armed forces. Primarily during the initial phase of an armed conflict, the bulk of friendly or enemy forces will initially be engaged in air operations (offensive counter air, defensive counter air, air interdiction), which means



that their availability for the direct support of land forces (battlefield air interdiction, close air support) will be very limited.

The mere fact, however, that soldiers from land, air and naval forces are serving in the same headquarters does not alone constitute joint command and control. The term "joint" denotes more than that: joint estimate of the situation, coordinated planning and tasking which takes into account the strengths of the respective services, joint control and joint adjustments during an operation.

The complexity of airspace control resulting from a near simultaneous utilization of airspace by air forces, artillery, air defense, combat helicopters, liaison flights and transport missions of the medical as well as the logistic services and possibly by civil aviation necessitates a detailed coordination between all parties involved.

Naval and naval air forces are particularly suited for crisis management. They conduct purely maritime operations as well as joint operations with land and air forces.

Thus, they contribute to maintaining the operational freedom of the other services. Transport missions, their own amphibious operations and seabased air and fire support constitute fields of cooperation with the land forces. In this connection, the specification of responsibilities regarding airspace control, lines of control and coordination, and command relationships during operations of maritime task forces or joint targeting required, for instance, during cruise missile firing operations will necessitate a considerable amount of coordinating activities most of which will also involve air forces.

In particular during engagements characterized by a rapid sequence of events, coordination within one's own service as well as between the services will be essential. As with operational planning it must be kept as simple as possible in order to establish

the necessary integration of command and control, reconnaissance and effect. For only simple measures will achieve success!

As Clausewitz said: *"Everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is very easy".*<sup>33)</sup>

### ***THE "COMBINED ASPECT"***

Combined operations have come to be conducted as a matter of course, as regards realization of NATO's London Declaration of 6 July 1990, which made multinationality a common goal. The German Army has assumed a peacemaker role in the Alliance. The German Army today provides elements for six corps in Central Europe. Only the IV Corps in Potsdam is still a purely national command.

Even if at first sight the aspect of multinationality only exerts an indirect influence on the conduct of "FREIE OPERATIONEN", it still demonstrates the need for a harmonization of operational doctrines and leadership training. It also emphasises the need to achieve of compatibility, in particular with regard to command and control assets and combat service support for multi-national forces.

Against this background and for the sake of the matter at hand we must be prepared for an unprejudiced discussion of previous "taboo subjects" such as the responsibilities of multinational commanders even in peacetime, the command relationships of OPCOM/OPCON and the authority of NATO commands with regard to the coordination of deployments and combat service support.

In this respect, multinationality does have a significant influence on the conduct of free-reeling operations - conducting operations in this way calls for highly efficient troops.

#### **IV. "FREIE OPERATIONEN" WITH REGARD TO ARMAMENTS PLANNING**

Apart from the politico-strategic aspects the development of armed forces is essentially determined by

- operational requirements
- technological trends and
- financial aspects.

As regards the future development of land forces, the operational setting may be summed up as follows:

German Army within NATO will operate with fewer forces in larger areas than before. Therefore, German Army Forces must learn, within the framework of NATO's Strategy of strategic defense and following counter-concentration, to regain the initiative at the operational level.

This means that command and control of forces in the conflict will be characterized by the struggle for freedom of action - the struggle for the initiative with the aim of winning the battle. While resorting to "FREIE OPERATIONEN" it will be imperative to seize the initiative, i.e. not to allow the enemy to dictate the decision but to seek it where terrain and balance of forces provide a favourable setting for friendly forces.

It is a prerequisite of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" that the commander determines the rhythm of the engagement himself. Rapidly switching between types of combat and often exposing his flanks, he has to conduct extensive operations aimed at utilizing the area for a rapid concentration of forces, and the establishment and switching of points of main effort.

Liddell Hart, the great strategic thinker, once wrote that the principle of indirect approach was the ultimate achievement of his life:

*When, in the course of studying a long series of military campaigns, I first came to perceive the superiority of the indirect over the direct approach, I was looking merely for light upon strategy. With deepened reflection, however I began to realize that the indirect approach had a much wider application - that it was a law of life in all spheres: a truth of philosophy. The indirect approach is as fundamental to the realm of politics as to the realm of sex".<sup>34)</sup>*

The principle of the art of command and control became formulated by the Chief of the German Army in somewhat simpler terms:

*"Command and Control of armed forces is the capability to make decisions which create own local superiority within an overall inferior situation. Generally this can be achieved by massing own forces at a pre-determined time and space".<sup>35)</sup>*

This ability is dependent on two prerequisites: utilization of the area and the creativity and flexibility of the higher command.

First of all some remarks on the utilization of the area with implications for German Army weapons planning. Utilization of the area with the aim of a superior and surprise response primarily requires a highly efficient reconnaissance capability and advanced information and command and control systems.

The fight for information is of paramount significance and ensures the time advantage required in the struggle for the initiative. In addition to the well known operational factors as forces, space and time, information has become the fourth factor essential for a modern conduct of operation. Therefore, *"to win the information war"/ "to establish*

*information dominance*” (e.g. *“Information dominance is the ability to use information systems and capabilities to achieve an operational advantage and to exploit it”*.<sup>36</sup>)) rightly is one of the main objectives in combat including the fight against the enemy’s command and control capabilities. However, information related superiority alone will not be sufficient; it must result in a superior response on the battlefield.

Important factors allowing a quick response in “FREIE OPERATIONEN” are weapon systems which will bring firepower to bear deep in enemy territory and enable friendly forces to exploit superior high technology in their fight for success.

In the future, long-range artillery systems equipped with smart ammunition and drones for combat and reconnaissance missions as well as air mechanized forces operating over large areas will give the army a deep battle capability and support - by the effect of their fires - operational endeavors to establish local superiority of forces for the direct engagement of armoured combat troops.

Or put it plainly: Strong enemy forces are destroyed before they can encounter friendly forces. But in addition to this direct effect deep battle also has an operational dimension, since these means of delivery increase operational freedom of action, for instance by engaging

- enemy forces unexpectedly turning up on the flanks and/or in the rear and
- enemy forces that threaten to penetrate a weak defense.

These potential threats to the friendly conduct of operations still require the employment of armoured reserves.

Moreover, long-range weapon systems are important assets in the fight for information superiority as they are particularly suited for directly eliminating enemy command and control and communications centres.

From this follows that the purpose of deep battle is three-fold:

- establish a favourable force ratio for the direct engagement of armoured combat forces;
- increase operational freedom of action and facilitate adherence to one's own main effort in local crisis as well; and
- reduce the enemy's command and control capability by attacking his command and control and communication centres.

This all may lead to the question: What about the significance of the traditional armoured forces? These forces will continue to be indispensable; they are and will remain the core of the army; it is impossible to seize or hold ground without them. For the tactical engagement we will still require superior battle tanks. In the overall concept of the German Army, they represent the "support leg", while extensively operating long-range artillery systems and Army aviation constitute the "free leg". Optimum exploitation of all elements in combined arms combat presupposes information superiority.

From a technical point of view, advanced information technology and precise standoff weapons represent the field offering the largest growth potential for new operational dimensions. These systems provide the response-related superiority required in case of numerical inferiority. These considerations have led or will lead to the German Army to the following armaments planning priorities:

- acquisition of advanced information technologies, including an electronic jamming capability;
- formation of an efficient combined artillery system equipped with smart ammunition;
- establishment of a deep battle capability;
- establishment of an Air Mechanized Brigade including combat and transport helicopters.

At the same time, the armoured combat forces are continually being modernized; particular emphasis is being placed on the LEOPARD 2 battle tank combat efficiency improvement.<sup>37)</sup>

#### **V. "FREIE OPERATIONEN" WITH REGARD TO LEADERSHIP**

Beside all the other elements of operations, creativity, flexibility and the will of higher commanders will still have a tremendous impact on successfully performing "FREIE OPERATIONEN".

The physical dimensions, the rapid course of events and the many individual elements to be coordinated in modern battle place extreme demands on commanders and staffs. The battle of Waterloo in 1815 for instance had a dimension of 4 by 7 km. In World War II, the battle of GAZALA/TOBRUK and vicinity, Libya, in May 1942 was fought on an area of front-length 25 miles with a turning movement of about 60 to 100 miles.<sup>38)</sup> In the future, armies will operate on an even larger scale and within the framework of close cooperation between land and air forces. Especially joint command and control is a prominent feature of successful operations. To paraphrase President Bush, jointness is

the use of the right force at the right place at the right time, and one could add, for the right purpose.<sup>39)</sup>

Air space and battlefield management are becoming more and more complex. Operations with the framework of multinationality will increase coordination requirements and place additional demands on commanders and staffs.

The two keywords in this context are “jointness” and “combined arms operations”. As it is well known in NATO Headquarters, the prerequisites and conditions for successful operations of forces within multinational formations are a multifaced subject. However, when studying great battles of the past it is fascinating to discover that the essential principles of operational thinking and acting have dated little if at all. Therefore, given the great variety of impressions and courses of events, modern military leaders must possess the ability to abstract what is required for developing and enforcing their basic vision of the battle.

“FREIE OPERATIONEN” require, as a creative act, selection of

- the type of combat,
- the area and
- timeframe.

The statement made by Fieldmarshal Helmuth von Moltke, that *“the command and control of armed forces is an art - a creative activity based on character, skill and mental power”*<sup>40)</sup> still applies today just as it did in the past.

One, if not the most important element, of operational art in war will be still the human dimension. As so well stated in a recent article in PARAMETERS:



***“.....ambiguity, miscalculation, incompetence and above all chance will continue to dominate the conduct of war. In the end, the incalculables of determination, morale, fighting skill, and leadership far more than technology will determine who wins and who losses”.<sup>41)</sup>***

The consequences derived from the principles of “FREIE OPERATIONEN” with regard to command and leadership training in the German Army can be outlined as follows:

As a basic precondition, effective military leaders must be capable of operational thinking and acting. Therefore, today’s operational commanders first of all must be able to think and plan on a large scale, abandon space limitations in their thinking and avoid any fixation on a dominant type of combat and a fixed sequence of suboperations. They must be able to think creatively and to consider events in their entirety before attending to individual factors and have a command of the technical qualifications and skills in the detail required for the conduct of operations and combined arms combat.

George Marshall once wrote:

***“The art of war, has no traffic rules, for the infinitely varied circumstances and conditions of combat never produce exactly the same situation twice...”*** and he concluded: ***“To master his difficult art (a leader) must learn to cut to the heart of a situation, recognize its decisive elements and base his course of action on these....The leader who frantically strives to remember what someone else did in some slightly similar situation has already set his feet on a well-traveled road to ruin”.***<sup>42)</sup>

Knowledge of alliance structure, procedures and techniques, of the English and French languages, the capabilities of the other services and an understanding of joint command and control must be integral parts of the training and education of officers in the German Army who are successfully to exercise command of "FREIE OPERATIONEN".

There is also a psychological factor, as experience shows, that is essential for success in a multinational environment:

Respect for other cultures. This must be based on education in the broadest sense. In addition to possessing the intellectual and technical abilities and skills required for the conduct of mobile operations, an officer must be educated and trained to become imbued with determination to gain the initiative and achieve freedom of action. This is an indispensable qualification of military leaders to be realized as an integral element of leadership training and follow-on training at all levels.

It is necessary to demand right from the start that commanders have the ability to think and operate independently. This principle, which Germans call **AUFTRAGSTAKTIK** (mission-type tactics), is the central element of German Army leadership philosophy.<sup>43</sup>) This means that commanders at all levels are assigned a mission which they are free to execute within the intent of the next higher echelon. But this frame of mind must be practised in peacetime! Therefore, the Chief of the German Army, has been given orders for the German Army to the effect that company commanders in future will be assigned only the objectives to be achieved in the training of their companies, while the time schedule and method of execution are left to him. Also he decided, to resume an old Prussian tradition, the Senior Commanders' Staff Ride,

which was developed in the 19th century. He will gather together officers ranking from colonel to two-star general for a period of one week, in order to familiarize them with the principles of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" and at the same time to precisely ascertain their capabilities. Ultimately, it will be essential to find and select those talented leaders who are available in any organization in limited numbers.

That leads directly to the question, what are the right kinds of leaders doing the various kinds of tasks that are required of the Army, in other words: leaders with leadership qualities. Military leadership in operational environments is not just a question of intellectual capacity but rather and in particular a question of character and personality.

Successful command of operations depends first and foremost on four factors:

- leadership qualities,
- sharing the risks of battle,
- caring for the morale and welfare of the troops,
- ethical principles.

### ***1. Leadership Qualities***

The primary precondition of success is a secure knowledge of operational and tactical doctrines and a rigorous application of the mission-oriented command and control (AUFTRAGSTAKTIK) which is based in the history of German military operations since Moltke.<sup>44</sup>) Successful leadership always requires staying power and a distinct will to prevail, which enable the commander to act both reasonably and decisively in situation of extreme physical and mental stress.

## ***2. Sharing the Risks of Battle***

An essential characteristic of leadership is the commander's willingness to share the risks and the stresses and strains of an operation with his troops. At no time may a commander delegate risks to the lower echelons. It is for this reason that in the German officer training, during the first few months of training, the officer cadets receive the same type of training as do their future subordinates.

The cohesion of a unit largely depends on the way the troops experience their commander. This principle has not been made obsolete by the automated and digitalized battlefield. Leadership includes leading the troops from "up front". Although this principle mainly applies to commanders at the lower levels of command, divisions and corps commanders must also have a feeling for when it is psychologically important to be present "up front".

## ***3. Caring for the Morale and Welfare of the Troops***

The trust and confidence that a military leader acquires on the basis of his specialist skills must be supplemented by the care he gives to the morale and welfare of the troops. Caring for the troops not only includes paying attention to their human needs and making sure they receive the appropriate material supplies and medical care. During a mission, caring for the troops means that a military leader must not only be a professional, he must also be human and responsible. The way he cares for his troops not only shows his personal integrity, it also demonstrates his credibility.

## ***4. Ethical Principles***

There is a close link between military leadership and ethical principles. To paraphrase the Chief of the German Army, in the army of democracy, leadership means

to internalize that we are soldiers for human rights and human dignity. All military decisions, actions and commands must be oriented on this principle. It ensures that we will have firm standards even in difficult situations. An army that does not need this principle will be an army without honor.<sup>45)</sup> This also complements the concept of *“Innere Fuehrung”*, the German doctrine of military leadership and civic education.<sup>46)</sup> Leadership can not function without the principles of *“Innere Fuehrung”*.

## **VI. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION**

**By way of summary, the author’s conclusions are as follows:**

- NATO’s current strategy has redefined the operational dimension. It has revived axioms from the German tradition of military command philosophy that has been taken up by our allies in a number of cases over the last few decades.
- The core of NATO’s current strategy as reflected in MC 400 is the forgotten principle of military-strategic counter-concentration which has generated fresh challenges at the operational level. Operations on the basis of military-strategic counter-concentration constitute a creative activity that, in the spirit of Moltke’s ideas, must be aimed at implementing situation-adjusted actions made up of forward-oriented elements.
- Ideally, the available forces should be capable of mounting a concentric counter-attack in the mold of Clausewitz. This implies a capability which enables the forces to defeat an enemy by surprise, possible with a single crucial operational counter-attack. Otherwise these forces will be a blunt sword. The form of the operational continuum in which they will be employed will be laid down in the Alliance’s military-strategic directive which is the result of the inter-action among the allied nations. This excludes any operational planning along the lines of operational planning in the era of the East-

West antagonism marked by detailed Contingency Operations Plans with their strongly forward-oriented elements and their numerous assumptions about the possible course of operations of an aggressor. Weaker forces, with which the enemy can not be defeated in a concentric counter-attack, increase the risk involved for the defender in terms of the outcome and duration of the operations. They place demands on commanders and troops.

- Up to the time when the military-strategic counter-concentration of friendly forces will be completed, the operational concept consists of the elements of forces provision, their deployment, i.e. build-up. Operations on the basis of the military-strategic counter-concentration posture will not be predetermined.

- Germany, after reunification, as a sovereign state has taken the chance of introducing its own military-strategic ideas in the process of future planning. In this context, it will be extremely important to make available space as an operational factor. These challenges go well beyond the military sphere. Meeting these challenges requires the involvement of the politicians who, as German President Roman Herzog put in his speech quoted at the early beginning. It is a common understanding, also for the new elected Government in October 1998, that the Federal Republic of Germany has a legitimate interest in protecting its territory against crises and military conflicts, to include countering them outside its national boundaries.<sup>47)</sup> Should such crises and conflicts occur on German soil, damage must be limited and any conflict must be finished quickly. Therefore, German forces have been reorganized to optimize their ability to cope with the new spectrum of conflict. The Bundeswehr, in particular the army - so called, "Das Heer fuer neue Aufgaben"/"The Army for future missions" - has

been structured to include rapidly available **Reaction Forces** and augmentation-dependent **Main Defence Forces**.

*What advice can be given for troop training and exercising?*

The German Army staffs and troops integrated in the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps(ARRC), European Corps(EUROCORPS), the Allied Central Europe Mobile Force-Land(AMF-L), the United States/German Corps(US/GE Corps), the Netherland/German Corps(NL/GE Corps) and the new Danish/Polish/German Corps as well as the IV.German Corps exercise within the frame of NATO's current military-strategy and will do so on a larger scale in the future. Also in those cases where all NATO's operational plans have not yet been issued, there are indications that the future operational dictates will contain provisions on how initial deployment for a military-strategic counter-concentration can be effected without friction by means of "area management". Future NATO plans will have to contain directives for the employment of German forces in national defence operations along Germany's borders, in the defence of the Central Region with a German contribution and in crisis management operations within or outside the NATO area when approved by the German Government. The operational concept, with its phased staging of forces, initial deployment and employment after a successful military-strategic counter-concentration, leaves fields of training and exercising that even now have to be tilled. In the light of this situation, procedures that can be practised under the roof of "staging" are selection, alerting, augmentation, supplementary operational training, the establishment of the wartime posture as well as the build-up of the combat service support organization and the command and control and combat support structures. This is what the forces must be trained to do. A procedure that

can be practised under the roof of "initial deployment" is the long-distance deployment of troops, within which they mobilize, assemble and prepare for action. Training and exercising can be done in this order: From the peacetime station to assembly area; from the assembly area to point of embarkation in Germany; from the point of embarkation to that of disembarkation; from the point of disembarkation to an assembly area; from the assembly area to the mission area. Uncertainties at the point of disembarkation may demand the employment of an advance unit. Area organization, movement control and transport coordination, fields in which we acquired a wealth of experience in the years of East-West antagonism, must go to waste. What must be trained and practised under the roof of "operations" what will be in the future mostly the execution of "FREIE OPERATIONEN" in a military-strategic counter-concentration context is combined arms operations in each type of combat. The German Army must be capable of quickly alternating between the various types of combat in any kind of terrain and in any kind of weather. Terrain-related specialization, of the kind that existed in the "layer-cake" corps sectors, is a thing of the past. Another aspect is that of practising interaction with our allies. The political decision not to organize and conduct exercises with fully manned and equipped forces in open country increases the demands of staffs. They must be in a position to raise their levels of proficiency in command post exercises and command and control units that primarily undergo training at training areas in combined arms operations in a combat environment. Procedures must be developed for raising and comparing the levels of staff proficiency. Simulator training becomes a matter of increased importance. All this has to be done based on the thoughts of operational art regarding to "FREIE OPERATIONEN".



## ENDNOTES

- 1) "The Unavoidable Globalization of German Foreign Policy", the German anniversary of the founding of the German Society for Foreign Policy, on 13 March 1995, as published by the German Government's Press and Information Agency No. 20/p. 161, dated 15 March 1995.
- 2) It is US policy to allocate specific mission options for their forces to potential crisis regions around the world. At the national US level they are called "National Political Continuum", at the military strategic level "Operational Continuum". "Operational Continuum" covers the entire spectrum of potential military missions ranging from relief operations to war.
- 3) The Alliance's Strategic Concept, see Press Communique S-1(91)85 of the NATO Press Service.
- 4) MC Directive for Military Planning of the Alliance's Strategic Concept dated 12 December 1991; abbreviated to MC 400: No 34 and Annex B; MC 400 is a classified NATO Confidential Document.
- 5) cf. MC 400, see above.
- 6) cf. The Alliance's Strategic Concept, see above, p 55 etc.
- 7) Eliot A. Cohen/John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, (The Free Press. A Division of Macmillan Inc. New York, 1996), p199/200.
- 8) Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence, The Evolution of Operational Theory*, (Frank Cass Publisher, London, 1997), p 8.
- 9) Marc Block, *L' étrange défaite*, (Paris: Societe des Editions Franc - Tireur, 1946), pp 55-56.
- 10) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976), compare Book VI, pp 357 - 501.
- 11) *Ibid.*, Book VIII, p 619.
- 12) *Ibid.*, Book IV, p 259.
- 13) *Ibid.*, Book IV, p 259.
- 14) *Ibid.*, Book IV, p 259.

- 15) Imperial Archive, The 1914 - 1918 World War, second volume, The Liberation of East Prussia, Berlin 1925, pp 43 (German version);  
also see, Christian Millotat, August 1914, Fuehrung und Operation im Spiegel eines literarischen Meisterwerks, (published in the German journal SOLDAT und TECHNIK, No 8/1988) p 488 - 493.
- 16) Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, edited and translated by Anthony G. Powell, (published by Presidio Press, 1994),p 104.
- 17) General H.N. Schwarzkopf, It doesn't take a hero, (Bantam Book, 1992).
- 18) Steven J. Biddel, Victory Misunderstood: What the Gulf War Tells Us about the Future of Conflict, (International Security, Fall 1996), p 142.
- 19) Richard E. Simpkin, Race to the swift, Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare, (Brassey's Defence Publishers, New York 1985), p xviii.
- 20) Jacob W. Kipp in James J Schneider, The Structure of Strategic Revolution, Total War and the Roots of the Soviet Warfare State, (Published by Presidio Press, Novato,CA, 1994), p xiii.
- 21) Helmut Willmann, Generalleutnant - Inspekteur des Heeres, during the International Doctrine Conference held in Berlin from 08. - 11.Oktober 1996.
- 22) Moltke's Military Essays, Article on Strategy, Tome I, p 71 (German version), Berlin 1902.
- 23) Force XXI Operations, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, 1 August 1994, p 2-9.
- 24) T.N. Dupuy, Understanding War: History and Theory of Combat, (Paragon, New York, 1987), p 170 - 173.
- 25) Army Vision 2010, Brochure from United States Army Chief of Staff, p 10.
- 26) Kurt Petersen und Ulrich Pracht, Information Warfare, (published in SOLDAT und TECHNIK 12/1995), p 783.  
"The ability to collect information about the enemy, processing by the brain and using these information in favor for own forces and simultaneously prevent the enemy by exploiting the same ability will decide future wars."
- 27) Heeresdienstvorschrift(HDv) 100/900, Fuehrungsbegriffe, Stand: April 1997.
- 28) Op-Plan European Corps for Exercise "PEGASUS 95", HQ EuroCorps, Strassbourg/France

- 29) See John Delaney, *Fighting The Dessert Fox, Rommel's Campaigns in North Africa April 1941 to August 1942*, (Arms & Armour Press, London, 1998).
- 30) Heinz Guderian, *Achtung - Panzer! The Development of Armoured Forces, their Tactical and Operational Potential*, translated by Christopher Duffy, (Arms and Armour Press, London, 1992), p 205-6.
- 31) See Moltke's Military Essays, Article on Strategy, (German version), Berlin, 1902.
- 32) See Moltke's Military Essays, Article on Strategy, (German version), Berlin, 1902.
- 33) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976), compare Book III, Chapter one, p 178.
- 34) B.H.Liddell Hart, *STRATEGY*, (Faber & Faber, London 1967), pp xix / xx
- 35) Helmut Willmann, Generalleutnant - Inspekteur des Heeres, during the International Doctrine Conference held in Berlin from 08. - 11.Oktober 1996.
- 36) Field Manual No. 100-5 (FM 100-5), Operations Revised Final Draft, June 1998, p 6-3.
- 37) Helmut Willmann, Generalleutnant - Inspekteur des Heeres, during the International Doctrine Conference held in Berlin from 08. - 11.Oktober 1996.
- 38) Thomas E. Griess, *The Wars Of Napoleon*, The West Point Military History Series, (Avery Publishing Group Inc., Wayne, New Jersey, 1985), pp 158-62 and Atlas for the Wars of Napoleon, map 65-69.  
Thomas E. Griess, *The Second World War*, map page 36.
- 39) President George Bush as quoted in Colonel David A. Deptula, USAF, *Firing for Effect: Change in the Nature of War*, Aerospace Education Foundation, p 17.
- 40) See experts of Moltke's military writings, published by the Great General Staff, in Dr. Inho Krumpelt, *Die grossen Meister der Kriegskunst*, Chapter "Generalfeldmarschall Graf von Moltke".
- 41) Klaus Hornung, *SCHARNHORST; Soldat - Reformer - Staatsmann*, (Bechtle Verlag, Muenchen, 1997), p 200.
- 41) Paul Van Riper and Robert H. Scales, "Preparing for War in the 21st Century", (PARAMETERS, Autumn 1997), p 10.

- 42) Russell F. Weigley, "The American Way of War", (Macmillan, New York 1973), p 215.
- 43) Klaus Hornung, "SCHARNHORST, Soldat-Reformer-Staatsmann", (Bechtle Verlag, Muenchen, 1997), p 200.
- 44) Hans-Martin Ottmer und Haiger Ostertag, Ausgewahlte Operationen und ihre militaerischen Grundlagen, (herausgegeben im Auftrag des Militaergeschichtlichen Forschungsamtes Verlag E.S. Mittler&Sohn GmbH, Bonn 1993), p
- 45) Helmut Willmann, Generalleutnant - Inspekteur des Heeres, used in speeches to German Army Company Commanders and Battalion Commanders in 1997/98.
- 46) Zentrale Dienstvorschrift (Zdv) 10/1 "Innere Fuehrung". The concept "Innere Fuehrung" provided the military with standards and regulations both for balanced "political" relations with other state institutions and for creating humane conditions within the military which would be open to the influences of democracy, civil liberty and plurality. Thus the concept of "Innere Fuehrung" became a manifestation of the democratic and pluralistic constitution in the state and society, which the Federal Armed Forces had to defend. Its implementation has served as good indicator of the state of relations between the military and society.
- 47) See coalition treatment between Social Democrat Party (SPD) and "Gruene/Bunte Liste 90", October 1998, Chapter Foreign Politics.

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